

VZCZCXRO8511
OO RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHLB #1336/01 1181650
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 281650Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3277
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 001336

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/SINGH/POUNDS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/2016

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: MGLE01--JA'JA' TO HARIRI CHRISTIANS NEED MORE
POWER, MORE CONFIDENCE AND MORE ATTENTION

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador. Reason: Section 1.4(b)

SUMMARY

11. (C) On April 28, just hours before the start of the national dialogue, Samir Ja'ja' stopped by the embassy to apply for a visa and to meet briefly with the Ambassador and PolChief. Ja'ja' said the national dialogue will not reach a conclusion on the presidency, but he hoped they might begin the process to achieve a road map to disarm Hizballah, a process he hoped would embarrass Michel Aoun. To reassure Christians and break the status quo, Ja'ja' suggested the PM shuffle the cabinet to bring politically powerful Christians into the government. Ja'ja' also shared his concern that Saad Hariri was running the March 14 alliance as a personal tool for the benefit of his Sunni allies, without consulting with Christians inside the alliance. Ja'ja' asked us to raise the issue of consultations with Hariri to make him understand that his methods fuel criticism from Michel Aoun and other quarters that Hariri is imperious in efforts to strengthen the Sunni in Lebanon.

DIALOGUE MAY REACH A SOLUTION
ON HIZBALLAH'S ARMS--EVENTUALLY
- - - - -

12. (C) Lebanese forces leader Samir Ja'ja' came to the Embassy to apply for a visa to the United States. After making his application, Ja'ja' met with the Ambassador and PolChief at the Ambassador's residence before driving to the afternoon national dialogue session. Ja'ja' described the general situation in Lebanon as stagnating, rather than negative. Although he did not expect the dialogue to solve the issue of the Lebanese presidency, he was hopeful that today's session might begin the process of drafting a road map for the disarmament of Hizballah. Admitting the difficulty of arrive at such a roadmap, Ja'ja' said the arms issue was less difficult than the issue of the presidency because it did not involve personal agendas and ego. Later, as he left the residence, he whispered that the subject of Hizballah's arms might serve to embarrass Michel Aoun, who on the one hand has an agreement with Hizballah but on the other would not want to be seen as the protector of Hizballah's arms.

SHUFFLE THE CABINET TO STRENGTHEN CHRISTIANS
AND GET THINGS MOVING
- - - - -

13. (C) To reassure Christians, and break the present deadlock in government, Ja'ja' said the majority should

shuffle the cabinet. Ja'ja' said it would be possible to remove one minister and reshuffle portfolios in order to place politically strong Christians in key ministries. Musing, Ja'j'a said, "Imagine that the PM wanted to appoint Boutros Harb and Nassib Lahoud and removed (Minister of Economy and Trade) Sami Haddad and (Minister of Finance) Jihaz Azour," technocrats who have no political power. He could remove one minister and replace him with another in the same decree without affecting the functioning of the cabinet.

Asked by the Ambassador how he would overcome a presidential refusal to sign a cabinet decree, Ja'ja' responded, "even better!" If President Lahoud rejected the changes when they arrive at his desk, the public perception will be that the majority is supporting Christian power in the cabinet and the president is opposing it. Ja'ja' said, "If Lahoud does object, Lebanon will continue with the status quo."

SAAD MUST CONSULT WITH HIS CHRISTIAN ALLIES

14. (C) Ja'ja' said that March 14 leader Saad Hariri was not consulting the Christians in his movement when making decisions about appointments. As examples, Ja'ja' said the Hariri had created an intelligence cell within the security services and expanded their powers and jurisdiction. A Sunni, Wissam al Hassan, heads the cell and all but seven of 30 officers within the powerful group were Sunni, he claimed. Ja'ja' cited other examples, including the Casino Du Liban, and other institutions in which Hariri, filling the Christian quotas, relied on people loyal to him without regard to Christian advice or sensibilities. When Christians are appointed, Ja'ja' said, they are usually those who have been long-term employees of Hariri rather than people identified by the Christians who have allied themselves with Hariri.

BEIRUT 00001336 002 OF 002

15. (C) Ja'ja' said Hariri should consult with all the Christians of March 14 and ask them for suggestions for appointments. Otherwise, Hariri will fuel complaints by Michel Aoun that the Sunni have taken control of every aspect of Lebanese public life. When Ja'ja' raised this issue with Hariri, Hariri responded that the Sunni had suffered a great deal to see the Syrians withdraw, and it was necessary to give them some reward now. Ja'ja' was clearly exasperated with his partner's response. "We are friends with Saad. But we are the Christians of March 14, Boutros Harb, Nassib Lahoud and the others. The Christians also suffered, "I went to prison, Aoun went to France," they too deserve some reward.
FELTMAN